

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 01150 141535Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 TRSE-00 /056 W

-----053005 142120Z /75

R 141300Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9865

INFO AMEMBASSY LAOGS

AMEMBASSY LOME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COTONOU 1150

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, DM

SUBJECT: BENIN WELCOMES ITS NEW CARDINAL

1. DESPITE THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN'S (GPRB) FREQUENT CONDEMNATION OF RELIGION AS "MYSTIFICATION" THOUSANDS OF BENINESE WERE ON HAND JULY 12 AT COTONOU AIRPORT TO WELCOME THEIR NEW CARDINAL. BENINESE ARCHBISHOP BERNARDIN GANTIN WHO WAS ADMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS ON JUNE 27, WAS OFFICIALLY WELCOMED HOM BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY OBOUENS, THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT AFTER PRESIDENT KEREKOU, INTERIOR MINISTER AZONHIHO, AND SEVERAL CABINET MEMBERS. JULY 13 EHUZU CARRIED FRONT-PAGE PICTURE OF OHOUENS AND THE OTHER MINPTERS ACCOMPANYING THE CARDINAL IN A MOTORCADE THROUGH COTONOU, TO SPECIAL MASS.

2. COMMENT: EDUCATED BENINESE OFTEN SPEAK OF A "DOUBLE REALITY" WHICH EXISTS IN BENIN: ALONGSIDE THE MARXIST-LENINIST REVOLUTION WITH ITS OFTEN VIOLENT RHETORIC AND RIGID IDEOLOGY, MANY PEOPLE CONTINUE TO LIVE MUCH AS THEY DID BEFORE THE REVOLUTION, WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT THEY NOW MUST KNOW SLOGANS, BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN RALLIES AND PRODUCTION EFFORTS,

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AND FORGET POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THE WELCOME ACCORDED THE CARDINAL IS A GOOD ILLUSTRATION OF THIS SECOND REALITY: THERE WERE MORE WELLWISHERS ON HAND THEN THE GOVERNMENT HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO ASSEMBLE FOR VISITING HEADS OF STATE FROM "FRIENDLY COUNTRIES." THE FACT THAT THE CARDINAL WAS GREETED BY KEREKOU'S DEPUTY AND HIS MINISTER OF INTERIOR/IDEOLOGY, SUGGESTS THAT EVEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, THERE IS

AN AWARENESS THAT IF THE REGIME IS TO SURVIVE AND PRESS
ON WITH THE REVOLUTION, IT MUST OCCASIONALLY MAKE CONCESSIONS
TO THE "SECOND REALITY."
THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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